

Remarks

Status of Claims

Claims 34-51 are pending in the application. Claims 35-38, 43-44 and 47 have been withdrawn. Reconsideration and reexamination of the application is respectfully requested for the reasons set forth herein.

Drawing Objections

The Examiner has objected to drawings Figs. 7-16 under 37 CFR 1.83(a). The Examiner contends that the features of claim 42 are not shown in Figs. 7-16 and must be shown or cancelled. Applicants respectfully disagree and maintain that the claimed features are clearly shown in the drawings and fully supported by the specification. Claim 42 recites that the second plug is provided with a sealing projection configured for engagement with the sealing member. The Examiner's attention is directed to Fig. 8 which clearly shows the sealing projection 198 configured for engagement with the sealing member 163 as described in the specification on page 17 at lines 3-5. Since the claimed features are clearly shown, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection is requested.

Claim Objections

The Examiner has objected to claims 34, 39-42, 45-46, and 48-51 because he asserts that in claim 34, line 6, the recited feature "a clamping member" is unclear since such feature is not shown or disclosed in the specification. Once again, Applicants respectfully disagree and maintain that the claimed features are clearly shown in the drawings and fully supported by the specification. The Examiner's attention is directed to element 704 in Figs. 7 and 9 and the

corresponding description in the specification on page 15 at lines 9-14. That paragraph, when read together with the drawings, clearly discloses that the clamping member (or device) is configured in this embodiment as a slide device as opposed to being configured as a locking lever as in the first embodiment.

Next, the Examiner contends that the connection region and sealing members are unclear and how the connection region could be sealed. Once again, Applicants respectfully disagree and maintain that the claims are clear as presented. Claim 34 recites the clamping device engaging with the second plug at a connection region, the connection region being provided with a sealing member configured to seal the connection region between the clamping device and the second plug. The connection region is therefore clearly defined in the claim and clearly located relative to the other elements of the claim. Furthermore, the specification, on page 16, lines 10-13, provides a description of the openings 72, 73 provided with peripheral sealing members 163 in order to seal this connection region and prevent the penetration of moisture into the interior of the first plug 1.

Next, the Examiner contends that in claim 40, it is unclear how the outer periphery of the opening is provided with the sealing member. Once again, Applicants respectfully disagree and maintain that the claims are clear as presented. Claim 40 recites that an outer periphery of the opening is provided with the sealing member. The claim is clear because the sealing member is properly located by the claim language as being provided on the outer periphery. The Examiner's attention is directed to Figs 7 and 8 which clearly show these features.

Claims 42, 48 and 49 are further objected to. The features of claim 42 are clearly disclosed and claimed as discussed above in reference to the Drawing Objection. The opening in

claims 48 and 49 is clear because it refers back to the only opening recited in claim 34 from which these claims depend.

Since the claimed features are clearly shown and described, reconsideration and withdrawal of these objections is requested. Applicants simply do not appreciate the Examiners assertions and invite the Examiner to call the undersigned Attorney if he does not understand any aspect of the invention which the Applicant maintains is clearly claimed and disclosed.

Claim Rejections

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

The Examiner has rejected claims 34, 39-42, 45, and 48 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by US Patent 6,183,275 issued to Okura et al. (hereinafter referred to as “Okura”). The Examiner asserts that the elements of these claims are disclosed by Okura. Applicants respectfully disagree. Claim 34 requires, inter alia, the clamping device engaging with the second plug at a connection region, and the connection region being provided with a sealing member configured to seal the connection region between the clamping device and the second plug. Okura does not teach nor suggest a sealing member in the connection region configured to seal the connection region between the clamping device and the second plug. While the Examiner points to Okura’s sealing member 16, that sealing member is not configured to seal a connection region as defined by claim 34. The connection region of claim 34 is defined at a location where the clamping device engages with the second plug. Okura’s sealing member 16, in contradistinction, only seals the second plug on the panel and does not seal his connection region 28, 29. Okura therefore can not be read to anticipate claim 34 nor those that depend

therefrom, namely claims 39-42, 45, and 48. Reconsideration and removal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claim 46 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over US Patent 6,183,275 issued to Okura et al. Since Okura lacks a teaching or suggestion of the elements of claim 34 from which 46 depends, there can be no prima facie showing of obviousness based on that reference. Reconsideration and removal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

. The Applicants gratefully acknowledge the indication of allowable subject matter in claims 49-51.

Conclusion

In view of the arguments presented herein, the application is considered to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and passage to issue is respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions or needs further clarification, he is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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